

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein the coupling is manually actuatable.
3. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein the coupling is automatically actuatable.
4. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 3, wherein each contact carrier housing includes means for automatic mechanical coupling to vehicles, ~~is designed for fastening to a coupling head of an automatic mechanical coupling for vehicles, especially rail vehicles~~.
5. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein one of the first and second contact elements have stationary contact surfaces and that the other sliding contact elements each have a spring contacts contact for engagement with the stationary contact surfaces.
6. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein one of the contact carriers is axially adjustable by means of a positioning device.
7. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 6, wherein the first contact carrier is axially adjustable by means of a positioning device and wherein the positioning device comprises a connected with the piston rod of a double acting pneumatic cylinder.
8. (Original) An electric contact coupling according to claim 6, wherein the other contact carrier is elastically axially supported and is biased in the coupling direction.

9. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 4 37, wherein the contact carriers are rotationally ~~securely~~ supported in their associated contact carrier housings.

10. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 4 37, wherein the first contact carrier ~~on its side facing the second contact carrier has a pot shaped cylindrical recess in which plug contact elements are arranged, which plug contact elements are intended for cooperation with complementary contact elements on a second contact carrier, includes a cylindrical recess having plug contact elements arranged therein and mateable with socket contact elements defined by the second contact carrier.~~

11. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 10, wherein the plug contact elements are formed as contact pins ~~and that the complementary and the socket~~ contact elements are formed as sockets.

12. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 4 37, wherein centering surfaces are formed on the plug part portion and on the socket portion part for cooperation with one another.

13. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 10, wherein centering elements are arranged in the recess ~~of~~ defined by the first contact carrier.

14. (Original) An electric contact coupling according to claim 13, wherein the centering elements are formed as ribs of an electric conducting material, which ribs extend between the plug contact elements and upon coupling are received in complementary recesses in the second contact carrier.

15. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 410 13, wherein the centering elements surround the plug contact elements, the centering elements acting individually or in groups ~~are surrounded by an~~ as an electric screen.

16. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 37⁴, wherein the first contact carrier ~~on its side facing away from the second contact carrier~~ is connected with a contact carrier container which receives terminal ends ~~of the~~ defined by the first contact element, the bottom of ~~which~~ the contact carrier container is being connected with the piston rod of the pneumatic positioning device, ~~the~~ which piston rod ~~has~~ having an axially through going cable channel ~~which enters into~~ in communication with the contact carrier container.

17. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 16, wherein a sealing surface is formed on at least one of the first contact carrier[[s]] ~~or on~~ and the contact carrier container for engagement with the second contact carrier housing.

18. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 37⁴, wherein the second contact carrier is being axially movably and ~~with radial play~~ supported in the second contact carrier housing, ~~which~~ the second contact carrier on its outer edge facing the first contact carrier ~~has~~ having a conical centering surface for engagement with engaging a complementary conical abutment surface of the second contact carrier housing, ~~and which~~ wherein the second contact carrier is being biased by spring means in the direction toward the abutment surface.

19. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 4 37, wherein the first and second contact carrier housings ~~are provided with each include~~ mechanical centering means ~~which in the coupling procedure come into mating engagement with one another. and wherein the mechanical centering means included in the first contact carrier housing are matable with the mechanical centering means included in the second contact carrier housing.~~

20. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 19, wherein the mechanical centering means of the first

and second carrier housings has an associated signal producer which responds to the mating engagement of the mechanical centering means.

21. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein at least one of the first and second contact carrier housings is coupleable to a coupling head via an elastic fastening element, wherein at least one of the contact carrier housings is characterized in that the carrier is fastenable to its associated coupling head by an elastic fastening element.

22. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 21, wherein the elastic fastening elements are so arranged so that the contact carrier housings extend in their coupling directions protrude slightly beyond the associated coupling head. ~~of the mechanical coupling~~.

23. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein the contact carrier housings each further comprise controllable closure means for moving the coupling openings of the defined by the contact carrier housings are each closable by a controllable closure between an open and a closed position.

24. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 23, wherein the contact carrier housings further comprise at least one closure plate the closure includes at least one closure plate movable substantially moving perpendicularly relative to the coupling axis.

25. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 23, wherein the closure is independently controllable in dependence on the coupling procedure.

26. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein the contact carriers in the coupled condition position are lockable relative to one another.

27. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein the first contact carrier is lockable with the second contact carrier housing.

28. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 26, further comprising a radially movable locking element on one of the first and second contact carriers, the locking element is arranged on one of the parts which are lockable to each other, which the locking element is intended for insertion being insertable into an associated recess in the other part defined by the other of the first and second contact carrier.

29.(Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 28, wherein the locking element on one of the first and second contact carriers is a pin movable by an electromagnet.

30. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 26, wherein the first and second contact carriers are lockable to one another latching takes place by means of at least one detent element.

31. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 28, wherein the locking or detent element is arranged on the second contact carrier housing.

32. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 28, wherein the locking or detent element is arranged on the socket part portion.

33. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 28, wherein the locking or detent element is so formed that in the event the a pulling force exceeds a given threshold value the latching of the latched together parts is released, the first and second contact carriers become unlocked from one another.

34. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 1 37, wherein at least one of the first and second contact carrier

~~housings further comprises a sensor is provided which supervises and that controls the entire insertion of the plug portion part into the socket portion. part.~~

35. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 6, wherein ~~the movable parts of~~ the positioning device comprises movable parts of are arranged at least substantially in one of the first contact carrier housing[[s]] ~~or in~~ and a housing connected with the first contact carrier housing.

36. (Currently Amended) An electric contact coupling according to claim 8, wherein the positioning device in ~~the a~~ coupled condition is switchable to a free running position in which the first contact carrier is axially freely movable with respect to the first contact carrier housing.

37. (New) An electric contact coupling comprising:
a first and a second contact carrier housing;
each of the first and second contact carrier housings containing a first and second contact carrier, each of the contact carriers containing at least one of a first contact element and a second contact element, the contact elements electrically coupleable with one another along a coupling axis;
the contact carriers being approximately rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis;
the first contact carrier defining a plug portion and an outer surface on which the first contact element is slidably positioned; and
the second contact carrier defining a socket portion adapted to mate with the plug portion and an inner surface on which the second contact elements is slidably positioned.

38. (New) The electric contact coupling according to claim 4, wherein the vehicle is a rail vehicle.